

A HANDBOOK OF MEDICAL HYPNOSIS. By G. Ambrose and G. Newbold.

Third Edition. (Pp. 336. 45s). London: Ballière, Tindall & Cassell, 1968.

SINCE the British Hypnotism Act of 1952 prohibited exhibitions of hypnosis for entertainment, Ulster is the only part of the United Kingdom where the average person's familiarity (indeed the average medical student or doctor's familiarity) with hypnosis is acquired from a theatre seat. This is the third edition of the authors' Handbook which tries to give an introduction to the subject suitable for practitioners and students.

The opening chapters cover the History of Medical Hypnotism, legal aspects, a discussion of the nature of the hypnotic state and a description of some of the techniques of induction. These are clearly written.

The remaining nine chapters cover hypnosis in various branches of medicine: General Medicine, Psychiatry, Anaesthesia, Paediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynaecology (3 chapters) and Dermatology. These are much more disappointing. The authors give superficial accounts of psychosomatic theories of causation of many diseases, with no discussion of the real uncertainty of these theories. When treatment is described, illustrated by case histories, the importance of *the hypnosis*, rather than the general psychotherapeutic approach, is not made clear. Some sweeping claims are made—for instance in the field of preventive psychiatry—which this reviewer feels could not be substantiated.

This is a book by committed protagonists, not a critical review. The opening chapters can be recommended to those interested in finding out about the approach and techniques. The claims in the later chapters would need to be substantiated. W.O.McC.

STUDIES IN PSYCHIATRY. Edited by Michael Shepherd, D.M., M.R.C.P., D.P.M., and D. L. Davies, D.M., M.R.C.P., D.P.M. (Pp. xi+345. 65s). London: Oxford University Press, 1968.

THE members of the junior medical staff of the Bethlem Royal and the Maudsley Hospital have paid their tribute to Professor Sir Aubrey Lewis on his retirement from the Chair of Psychiatry at the University of London by publishing in two volumes a selection from his writings. The present volume represents part of the harvest that has been reaped as the result of his inspiration and foresight in recognising those aspects of Psychiatry that could be more sharply defined and coaxed to yield valuable information by the application of the scientific method. It is the clinician whose knowledge is enriched by many of the studies described in this book. Little by little facts emerge that help to make psychiatric formulations more precise and treatment more rational.

The work described in this volume is the output of only one of the several departments of the Institute of Psychiatry between 1945 and 1966. The reader will quickly appreciate how frequently the clinician turned to the laboratory and back again to his patients in his quest for explanations of some of the phenomena of Psychiatry. The research worker emerges not as one working in isolation but as a clinician who turns aside from time to time to try to answer some of the questions posed by his patients' illnesses. How closely this approach is in line with Sir Aubrey's views is exemplified by Dr. Davies' quotation in his chapter on Psychiatric Education and Training: '... formulating the problem, relating it to what may be learnt elsewhere than in the company of the patient—this is the body of psychiatric opportunity'.

It would not be appropriate to review here chapter by chapter the record of the work done in the Department of Psychiatry. Each chapter is written by a senior member of the staff who was, and often still is, actively engaged on the work described, and whose work is well known in that particular field. The book is divided into three parts, the first being concerned mainly with Social Psychiatry, Epidemiology, Psychology and Forensic Psychiatry. Part two deals with child Psychiatry, Genetics and Education, whilst part three is devoted largely to physiological, neuro-endocrine, biochemical, pharmacological, and metabolic studies.

This book will provide rewarding reading not only for clinicians but for anyone contemplating systematic research in Psychiatry. It displays at one and the same time something of the complexities of the problems facing Psychiatrists and how they may be tackled by the